The Hourglass

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/5323715.

Rating:	Explicit
Archive Warnings:	Graphic Depictions Of Violence, Major Character Death
Categories:	M/M, F/M, F/F
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Francis Dolarhyde/Other(s)
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Jack Crawford, Francis Dolarhyde, Abigail Lecter, Eleanor Lecter, Annabel Lecter, Original Graham-Lecter Child(ren)
Additional Tags:	Alpha/Beta/Omega Dynamics, Past Mpreg, Alpha Hannibal, Omega Will, Implied/Referenced Rape/Non-con, Hannigram- Freeform, Conjugal Visit, Anal Sex, Canon-Typical Violence, Death, Alpha Hannibal Lecter
Language:	English
Series:	Part 2 of Shifting Sands
Stats:	Published: 2015-11-30 Completed: 2017-06-12 Words: 10,620 Chapters: 7/7

The Hourglass

by CrippledShadow

Summary

Three years after the Chesapeake Ripper was finally apprehended Jack convinces Will to help him just one more time.

Notes

Thanks again to everyone who was so supportive of Timeworn Morality :)

Enjoy :)

P.s I actually do really like Molly but I didn't want to alter her to fit the way I've set the story up. Just for clarification :)

Chapter 1

The early snowfall didn't have the same crisp, clean feel as the heavier sheets that would begin in a few weeks, still shallow enough to slosh with the dirt underneath. Will reluctantly pried his gaze away from the attempted snowman constructed by the front steps as Jack finally spoke.

"We can't talk inside? I've come too far to let the cold stop me, Will."

It's such a typical arrogant alpha thing to say that Will couldn't help an unhappy huff of laughter.

"Why should the cold stop what common sense couldn't? I don't want to talk about this at all. Oh, and if you've got pictures, do me a favour and don't bring them out. There's a few conversations I'm not ready to have with Abigail yet."

Jack swirled his coffee mug distractedly for a moment before setting it down. "How much do you know?"

"Two families killed in their homes a month apart. The Jacobis were all betas. The Leeds' were a bonded pair, the children were estimated two alphas and one omega. Similar circumstances…"

"Not similar: the same. All this time, reading over stories about slaughtered families in the papers, you ever think about giving me a call?"

"No. I didn't call you because I didn't want to. I don't think I can be of any use to you, Jack. I don't think about… this anymore." Unbidden images of the last time he'd put himself out on a line at Jack Crawford's behest filtered through his mind.

"All dead." The older man took two photographs from is coat pocket and held them out. After a long pause the omega took them without looking up. Simple family snapshots, happy families…

He startled at the sound of the door clicking open.

"Hello young lady," Jack said, stooping to look down at the small figure attached loyally to Will's leg. The little girl's dark eyes stared back him suspiciously. "I don't think you'll be able to remember last time we met." Jack managed a small smile as he looked down at the child. "Your mom and I used to work together before you were born."

Abigail regarded the alpha, brows knitted together. She glanced up to Will for confirmation. "Daddy?"

"Nothing to worry about, honey. Could you keep an eye on Anna and Ellie for me a little longer?"

“I never picked to be called ‘mama’ and don’t tell me how much she looks like him,” Will said once his daughter had hurried back inside. Jack chewed his lip, but didn’t press the point he wouldn’t have been able to miss.

“I think this freak is in phase with the moon. Killed the Jacobis almost four weeks ago in Chicago. Full moon. Killed the Leeds family in Buffalo night before last a day short of a lunar month. So, that means with a little bit of luck, we might have a little more than three weeks before he does it again. I wouldn’t ask if I wasn’t desperate. Ten people are dead, six of whom are children not much older than her.” Jack pointed through the window at the figure curled on the couch, her little feet propped on one of the many dogs.

The psychology may have been lazy and obvious but that didn’t erase the desired effect.

“You don’t know what you’re asking, Jack.”

“I’m not asking you to run blindly back into the field, just to help look for answers.” Jack recoiled a fraction in shock at an actual laugh.

“Do I have to remind you of how much I’ve already done for your cause and unrelated others? I sat through sessions with social workers and three different therapists to verify whether or not my testimony could be trusted. I let my personal life and intimate details about my daughter be dissected in court because, and just to top it off, a TattleCrime article slipped under my door detailing information that you guaranteed me wouldn’t be leaked.” As much as he wanted to forget the half truths and speculations Freddie Lounds had spun about him he couldn’t erase the ‘concern’ expressed about what could be expected from their daughter.

“Will, the confession wasn’t the only evidence so only the audio was shown in court unless the jurors requested the full video later, which they probably wouldn’t have.” Jack bristled at the outburst from an omega but clearly attempted to retrain himself.

“How many people saw it?”

“Not too many since until he was found guilty it was still classified as ‘private material’. I made sure the press didn’t get more than a transcript.” Jack stood up and made to grab the other’s shoulder before changing his mind. “I know you’ve already been through enough so you’ll understand why I’d only be asking this because we need you. I understand if you want to put yourself and your family first but think about it.”

Ellie’s chubby fingers curled around Anna’s foot as they dozed. The twins were more manageable than Abigail had been at that age, docile and soothed easily by each other’s company. It was quite adorable how in sync they were with one another, almost as if they understood the cheerful babble exchanged. Little signs like their desire to be together even in sleep was a possible indicator of their secondary gender but Will hoped for their sakes he was wrong.

Will watched the identical dark heads and petite, little bodies huddled together in the nightlight glow before carefully easing the door shut. He checked Abby was asleep, dark honey blond plait draping over the pillow, before going to bed himself.

Despite all that had happened it had been a good three years. It had been easier than he'd thought to sell his old farmhouse, marred by far too many surface memories. The house in Chandel Square had sold considerably better than he'd hoped for thanks to the novelty of being able to store sports gear and christmas decorations in the same basement where an unknown number of people were murdered. The modern world's fascination with serial killers and a certain niche appeal among select individuals.

There was no real point in debating what decision he would come to in the end; how could he look at his children without guilt if there was a chance he could have helped catch a killer with a focus on children and couples who were happy?

The children's bodies propped against the wall, a parody of fixed attention… Leeds' shredded throat gapping open like his lax mouth as he 'watched' his mate and the intruder in the same bed beside him…Mrs Leeds' conscious long enough watch helplessly and endure everything….

Will blinked, confused momentarily of where he was, how he had managed to leave the Leeds' house at least physically. His thoughts were a mess of the dead family and kinder memories slowly tainting with the barbarity of the former.

"Will, I don't know what you're complaining about. You got us a partial print and that's the most we've got," Jack sighed without looking up over his desk.

"It's difficult to slot back into that way of thinking after so much time." Will ran a tired hand through his hair.

"Well, I need your head here or you're no good to either of us or anyone else."

"What exactly do you expect?"

"Trying to be maternal doesn't suit you, Will."

Will dug his hands into his pockets as he mulled over a better response than the one threatening to escape. "There is something else I can do. I can wait until I'm driven to it by desperation in the last days before the full moon, or I could do it now, while it might be of some use."

"Is there an opinion that you want, Will?"

"It's a mindset I need to recover. I have to see Hannibal."

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

> Despite stirring up some sad memories I must say, this chapter on the whole was quite fun to write ;) *holds hand up to block the sexism leaking through*

Seated at his desk Hannibal inhaled without looking up from his sketch. He did not need to look for confirmation of who was standing on the other side of the glass.

“Hello Will.”

“Dr Lecter.”

“Are we no longer on first name terms?" Hannibal smirked. "Distancing through titles seems fairly useless in light of our history.”

“I think it will make it easier to keep things professional.” Will tucked the case file under his arm so he could hide his nervous hands behind his back. As much as he had tried to prepare it was difficult seeing the man again and in the fitting circumstances. There was no monster suddenly released from the restraints Hannibal constructed; the 'person suit' had simply been set aside, the quiet, foreboding presence revealed worse in a way than the ravings and aggression of some of the other inmates.

“Jack Crawford whistles and here you are again. How disappointing.”

Will didn’t answer but the alpha could make out the tension in his stance, flighty or merely defensive. The omega was no less pale than last time they spoke but otherwise looked healthier. Finally attempting to take better care of himself, perhaps at someone else’s behest.

“I could have made this transition much more challenging for you. I allowed my property and money to be passed directly to you rather than put into trust for Abigail and ensure that the conditions of my plea allowed us to retain mated status,” Hannibal remarked conversationally, watching the younger man under his lashes.

“What does that say about our legal system that after an alpha is sentenced to life imprisonment their mate is still classified as property?”

“Would you have preferred for me to have withdrawn my claim and allowed you all the rights of an unclaimed omega who was irresponsible and careless enough to slut around during heat? I’m sure there’s not shortage of former colleagues and TattleCrime readers who believe Ms Lounds’ speculations and would be quite happy to remind you.”

“I suppose you’d like to be thanked for that curtesy,” Will snorted, not quite covering his discomfort at the implications. “Well, I am grateful for that but don’t pretend that was all for my benefit; you don’t like to share.”

“No, I do not. Is there a new someone in your life, perhaps a sympathetic beta who wouldn’t mind some readymade children? Not many alphas are interested in damaged goods much less with another’s baggage in tow.” Hannibal laid down his pen, the clumsy felt not allowing him to do proper justice. He looked up at his mate. “Plenty don’t mind broken in toys; they just have no interest in mating them.”

“That’s not what I’m here to talk about.” Will saw the other man’s nostrils flare, trying to draw more information through the crude air slots in the glass. Somehow the gesture felt more evasive than an actual touch on his skin.

“No, it’s about Chicago and Buffalo and you want to know how he’s choosing them. Was it Jack’s idea to consult me or yours?”

“You already know the answer to that. And honestly, I expected more of you than petty games.”

“Give me the file and then we can discuss terms.”

“I’m not negotiating with you. Goodbye Doctor Lecter.” Will ducked his head subconsciously as he turned to go.

“Was the baby a boy or a girl?” Hannibal smiled as the other paused, shoulders tensing.

“What?”

“You are wearing nursing pads and a certain ointment to reduce discomfort.Then there is the faint odour of the frozen cabbage leaves you’ve been applying to reduce and regulate milk production both while starting breastfeeding and in the weaning process. An odd home remedy but proven to be effective. I doubt you would still be suckling a four year old.”

Will didn’t answer, twitching as if resisting the reflex to cross his arms over his chest. There was no evident sign of swelling although without layers of clothing may have been a different matter.

The chances of pregnancy during an induced heat were less than 15%, a luxury item rather than an aid in the primary purpose of heat cycles.

“I’m glad I left more evidence behind on you. Children can make a more lasting impression than
scars. No doubt you considered the odds and dismissed the risk. A shame you played and lost,” Hannibal sighed, leaning back against the desk.

“It was a surprise but losing would imply that I wasn’t happy with the result, at least in the end.” As he spoke, Will slipped a worn photograph from the front pocket of his wallet and

threaded it through one of the air holes. “I debated whether or not to show you this, whether you deserved to see them. But, since you already figured it out you may as well.”

Hannibal knelt to take it, noting how the younger man didn’t step back as if attempting to prove a point that he wasn’t afraid of him. Quite silly really, but his mate need not have worried about being grabbed through the glass. A second of contact through the omega’s sleeve wasn’t worth the consequences when he was now in a position to demand a lot more.

The little girl was lean and willowy for her perspective age, none of the natural puppy fat clinging to her already defined cheekbones and jawline. It wasn’t hard to imagine the woman she would grow into; slim and most likely as tall as her mother by mid teens, long, sturdy hunter’s legs refined to sports or ballet.

The girl smiled up at the camera, as did the smaller figure gripping her shoulder for support as they stood, but the third’s mouth was obscured by the tiny fist he or she was chewing intently.

He smiled at the dark hair hanging around the youngest two’s cherubic faces in loose ringlets and the three pairs of dark eyes, tinted with maroon staring back at him.

“Twins.”

“I guess I never mentioned there were a few cases on my absentee mother’s side. Eleanor and Annabel.”

“Is there a significance to those names?” Hannibal ran a nail over the frozen smiles, being careful not to leave a smudge.

“Sort of. My stillborn sister’s first and middle. Neighbour’s dog knocks into a pregnant woman in her last two weeks and I’m only here because of the angle she fell on.”

“Most would argue an event like that would make the remaining child all the more precious to a mother and yet she abandoned you not long after,” Hannibal mused. “You should have told me that a long time ago.”

“I don’t think my sister’s death had the same impact on me that yours clearly did.”

A flicker of raw emotion across the alpha’s face revealed the slit in his mask and Will fought the omegan urge to apologise. It was an unsettling reminder of the influence the man still held over him after three years apart.

The moment passed as quickly as it had come; the uplifted corner of the veil yanked back into place.

“I will help you, just like old times but not as a favour; as I stated, I do want something in return.”

Will raised a eyebrow. “It looks like Alana’s been accommodating.” The glass cell was considerably larger than most dorm rooms.

“Yes, Doctor Bloom. A lingering aspect of our former friendship,” Hannibal mused, ignoring the question. “She is becoming quite an oddity as an omega, even more than you. A psychiatrist, although in family trauma mind, and now the head of the Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.”

“What do you want?”

“Let me see the file first. And I’ll need an hour of privacy.”

“Fine, but I’ll take that photo back now.”

Will counted slowly to one hundred before heading back in after the promised hour had finished.

“This is a very shy boy, Will, but quite interesting. Before we begin,would you like to talk about our last encounter?”

“Not particularly.”

“Quite an inspiration to other omegas, weaponising your body against me.”

“None of us are above biology and instincts. Not even you.”

“No we are not,” Hannibal paused, a slight smile on his thin lips. “Do you think the killer you’re searching for feels an ingrained need to kill, or does so just for the thrill?”

“That’s one of the things I was hoping you would tell me. Unless anything about him reminds you of another former patient and save us all the time.”

“No, I do not know who he is,” the alpha replied without the slightest shift in his expression. “I haven’t forgotten anything of note since childhood. I could as easily recall the exact embroidery pattern of rue flowers on my sister’s christening gown as I could every mark on your body, both naturally occurring and the ones I put there. But I believe that brings us back to my terms.”

Will looked unsettled by his choice of words but did not comment further and repeated his question. “What do you want?”

“My visitors are mostly academics as dull as the likes of the late Fredrick Chilton, and I had been so hopeful that you would seek conjugal visits on your own terms.”

Will returned his gaze confusedly, cheeks colouring adorably as the implication dawned on him.

“No.”

“Is the prospect of time in my company more unpleasant than however many more families slaughtered?”

“That’s only applicable for heat visitation and I don’t have time for that. Even if I wanted to…”

“You haven’t been back on suppressants very long. It would take several months off suppressants before you will be fertile again but missing a couple of doses will most likely be enough to trigger a very short, instinctual heat which will probably last less than three days. It would be no more harmful or time-consuming than the last time you manipulated your biology.”

“You realise the security cameras and bugs would have recorded everything you just said?”

“Alana is more considerate than her predecessor. No one will review conversations recorded unless there is cause for suspicion which conjugal visits are not, regardless of circumstances.” Hannibal approached the glass. “I miss the days when you viewed me as a friend and partner not a captor and I can assure you that I regret the loss of our conversations and general companionship as much as other pursuits. Take a day to consider how far you are willing to go to save lives.”

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

> Diverting a bit along the canon timeline here and compressing a few important moments so it doesn't sound too repetitive.
>
> Just to be 100% clear the few lines of italics are flashback to one of the phone calls with Dolarhyde and one line from Jack. Only saying so because I've had questions previously
>
> :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"It stunned me the first time I saw it." The voice cracked and halted with emotion rather than the slight speech impediment still just noticeable.

"Like Blake peeked in your ear and saw the Red Dragon there. But the dragon and your wills are starting to seperate."

"The Dragon has never spoken to me before. It was frightening."

"What did it say?"

"It called my name. It wants her."

"You can choose to have her alive. You don't have to worry about feeling love for her."
He envisioned the man leaning forward in his seat, face levelling out of his hands…

Hannibal had listened to the other killer's lament, reassurances flowing off his tongue automatically without much thought. It was more entertaining than his current situation.

It was almost shamefully easy to ignore Alana when she entered her impassioned rants, falling back into the same predictable tune as a layman. He appreciated the woman's attempt at maintaining a calm and courteous facade as she rifled through the drawings on his desk. There was no real imagination in her attempts to reinstate power. Jack watched silently from a corner, hands tucked into his coat pockets.

"You suspect a lot Alana. It is interesting that you are still trying to protect Will after so many years. Although I must thank you for your contribution by recommending my services."

The woman stepped closer, tilting her head back defiantly in contrast to the traditional omegan gesture. “Will has requested heat visitation rights and I feel I’d be very justified in denying that.”

“What would be your reasoning?” He continued when Alana remained silent. “Are you suggesting I don't have Will's best interests in mind?”

“I'm stating it as fact. I don’t intend to allow Will to act so self-destructively if you have nothing relevant to barter with on the Tooth Fairy.”

“Will Graham interests me, almost as much as you do. Not your typical omega, would quite like to meet you both under more accommodating circumstances. There is still so much to be shared…”

“Alana,” Jack cut in warningly. Alana bristled, retreating back a few metres instead of directly pushing the hand off her shoulder.

“I wondered how long it would take for you to visit me. How have you been since Bella died?” Hannibal asked, addressing the other alpha for the first time.

“As much as I’m sure you’d love to waste my time for your own amusement Doctor, I’d like to get straight to the point.”

“Very well Jack. Were you hoping to talk about the Tooth Fairy or about Will?”

The older alpha stood with forced casualness. “We both know that Will worked best when you were inside his head and I need him to solve this.”

“I agree but don’t think you can persuade me to play along with appeals to my intellectual vanity.”

Somewhere behind him Alana scoffed loudly but neither man paid her attention.

“I don't think I'll be the one to persuade you, Doctor. You'll either play, or you won’t.”

He recalled the second to last time he had spoken alone with the agent a few weeks before he’d bonded with Will, over five years ago. *"I'd rather he go a little mad if the price was saving lives and I expect he feels the same."* He doubted Jack had ever seen Will as more than a tool or perhaps more kindly a useful asset even before when he'd thought he was beta.

“Chumming the waters like old times,” Hannibal smirked. “I been able to read the latest release on TattleCrime; the words ‘takes one to catch one’ were used quite frequently. Thanks to you and Miss Lounds’ efforts the killer has already seen Will. It would be in his best interests to kill him although of course you have no qualms on that subject.”

“In light of Freddie Lounds’ last article Doctor Bloom was requested to inquire into any correspondence you received in the last week. Two calls from your lawyer’s office although he confirmed an hour ago that he has not contacted you since you were declared insane. Has the Tooth Fairy contacted you?”

Hannibal inclined his head. “We have conversed but I believe he should be entitled to the name he has chosen: the Great Red Dragon."

“You now have an opportunity to be relevant again and earn additional privileges.”

Jack spoke as if choosing his words very carefully, a pre-made argument rejected and cherry picked. “If you can make that lead work for us. Quite simple, when the Tooth- the Dragon calls you keep him on the line long enough for us to trace it. But, any additional privileges your cooperation earns will be determined by Doctor Bloom, not you .”

“How fortunate for dear Will,” Hannibal remarked. “If you had no other leads I’m sure you would have him bent over that table for me within an hour, no questions asked. All you really see omegas as good for, present company excluded of course.”

Jack didn’t raise to the taunt but Alana tensed visibly, her slim body strung taunt like a violin string.

“I’ve allowed certain privileges during your incarceration but that remains conditional, largely dependant on your cooperation now,” she said cooly. “If you can’t abide by those conditions and behave yourself then they all will be revoked.”

The alpha paid little mind to the woman’s threats, although no doubt she wouldn’t hesitate to fulfil them, as he considered the opportunities potentially laid out for him.

"I did not expect to see you again so soon.” Hannibal smiled without turning at the sweet, ripe scent.

“That’s a lie and I’m not here by choice,” Will said flatly. “What happened to your drawings?”

"Punishment for bad behaviour,” Hannibal replied. “I wonder how far the Dragon will go for my approval or to repay my part in his almost arrest.”

“Before I answer anything you have to say, I need to know what you told him,” Will paused, swallowing to cover up his voice cracking slightly. “If you talked to him about my family.”

“Not at great length. Do you find yourself thinking differently now that you are potentially in the same situation as Mrs’ Jacobi and Leeds?”

“That’s a pretty fragile comparison and you know exactly what I’m thinking.”

“The first small bond to the killer itches and stings like a leech. Like you he needs a family to escape what's inside him. Do you worry that Abigail will struggle to trust you once she’s old enough to understand? That the little ones will find out from another source?”

Will sat down heavily with a sigh, burying his face in his hands. “You told the Dragon the call was being traced,” he stated. “Now that you’ve established yourself as relevant, you’re

not leaving many alternatives other than cooperating with your terms. Just as I'm sure you planned."

The alpha silently approached, pausing as he reached the glass. The movement brought him almost within reach of Will's hunched form. Hannibal curled his hands together behind his back to fight the temptation to try to reach through one of the air holes to caress the omega's sweaty curls, the alluring scent of approaching heat.

"I have to believe there is a common factor between the families and we will find it soon," Will breathed, still not raising his head.

"Otherwise you have to enter more houses and see what the Dragon has left for you. Eleven days to the next full moon. Tick-tock." Hannibal paused, inhaling again deliberately less discreetly. "Have you made up your mind on how much you're prepared to do in order to catch him? Otherwise I would guess you have less than twelve hours to make other arrangements."

Chapter End Notes

Oh Hanni, you awful, cheeky little hypocrite ;)

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

Just another small chapter today but I hope enjoyable ;)

Although the fever hadn't started yet, Will's limbs ached as cramps coursed through his stomach, hips and lower back. It had been four days since he'd last taken suppressants.

He remembered how Abigail's face had lit up as she broke away from the hostess pushing the twin's stroller and ran towards him at the airport. Abby's nose and brow had crinkled as he picked her up, noticing the slight change in his scent although she would not have known the reason why.

"Thank you for letting them stay here again."

"Don't thank me, it was Margot's suggestion. We've actually been considering applying to convert part of the manor into rooms for foster care, plenty of ground for more buildings if needed." Alana straightened up from kneeling in front of the stroller, her face settling into a tired smile. "But it's nice to see Abby again and finally meet Ellie and Anna."

Both omegas watched Margot lift Abby up to pat one of the horses, the child's delighted laugh ringing out as it nosed at her coat.

Although the girls were still too young to be frightened by the fuss of leaving their home and Abigail was quite excited overall, the disappointment on his eldest daughter's face when she realised he was leaving her again had been trying. However, despite her often closed off demeanour Margot had proven to be quite a natural with the girls.

"That sounds like a good use for the estate after Mason."

Mason Verger's 'fall' into the pig pen had been publicised a year earlier and he had yet to regain consciousness or demonstrate brain activity. Margot's petition for the right to euthanise her brother had only recently been granted.

"Do you think Hannibal would've said anything about them?" Alana asked, lowering her voice.

"Hannibal says he wouldn't want them harmed but that's not a guarantee anyone wants to rely on."

It wouldn't be that difficult for the killer to find out their address considering the skills and resourcefulness it had taken to contact an inmate in high security prison under guise of his lawyer. It was a relief to know they wouldn't have to be divided up between different

temporary foster families or CPS homes. It also ensured, as Jack had been quick to point out, no details on the investigation would be leaked.

“I don’t approve of what you’re doing, Will,” Alana said suddenly. “It took you this long to get past what he did to you. You shouldn’t have agreed to consult and Jack shouldn’t have asked at all.”

“I don’t really feel like there’s a choice anymore Alana.”

The lower levels of the BSHCI reeked of stale pheromones growing steadily more concentrated as he and the orderly drew closer to the visitation rooms. Besides a lewd remark during his mandatory cavity search the beta had barely spoken a word. Even though his mind was beginning to blur Will still shivered internally at the memory and the way the jumpsuit he’d been given was starting to stick to his thighs.

Will stumbled slightly as his escort stopped in front of the far door, pulling out his badge to swipe the lock. “There’ll be a staff member watching behind the glass at all times and the intercom and panic button are just beside the door if you need it.”

Will managed a barely audible ‘thank you’ before stepping into the cell, the warning on the security door buzzing loudly as it opened and closed.

One way glass windows dominated two of the concrete walls, furnished with the basics: a metal sink, toilet and shower, a double mattress and a sturdy metal chair bolted to the floor against the far wall. Seated in the chair, Hannibal held himself regally despite the restraints around his arms,legs and chest.

"How does this work?"

"That is entirely your choice. Either you remove your clothes and take what you need or you can let me assist you. Although," he paused, fingers digging into his palms beneath the restraints. "I can't guarantee how helpful my insight into the case will be if I’m distracted by not being able to touch you.”

Will hesitated before finally closing the distance between them and awkwardly kneeling down to undo the straps, holding the back of the chair for support as more the cramps in his stomach and back made him wince.

Hannibal gently pulled his mate off the floor, one practiced hand resting on a familiar hip to turn him while the other tipped Will's chin up to better be able to scent him.

"Are you still too proud to admit that you missed me as I missed you?" The softly spoken words rumbled against Will's throat as the alpha continued to inhale from his pulse point.

"Please..." Will groaned, pressing back against the older man.

Hannibal chuckled as he walked Will towards the mattress on floor, reaching around to undo the buttons on his mate's jumpsuit. Despite the evidence of his own arousal pressed against the omega's arse Hannibal continued to undress him without any sense of urgency.

The omega let out a relived sigh as the material fell to his waist, slowly worked down his legs and off. Hannibal guided the younger man to his hands and knees on the mattress before he stood to remove his own jumpsuit and laceless canvas shoes. The last of his clothes discarded, he took his time to open and prepare his mate with his tongue and fingers till Will was reduced to shivers and moans beneath him.

“If I could only have access to your mind or your body I would choose the former without hesitation,” the alpha murmured, finally pushing his cock past the guardian muscle into his omega’s tight heat. “But I cannot deny I would miss the latter.”

Will whimpered into the bedspread, head ducked between his arms. The agenda he had originally come to pursue had drifted to a far corner of his mind as he let himself be lost in the pleasure of the present moment.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

> As most of us already know in the novel Red Dragon it was actually Freddie who Dolarhyde burned alive but NBC did it differently (like a lot of changes from the books and movies). Although I haven't checked this theory anywhere my guess based on other things that got censored is that it was decided that the dialogue and biting lips off would be too frightening with gender-swapped Freddie even if it wasn't sexual. Does make sense with a few interviews with BF about how hard they tried not to fixate on the rapes of Mrs Leeds and Jacobi (or that the attacks were largely aimed at them, at least in the book)
>
> I won't dwell too long on this but I wanted to have a chance to briefly visit Dollarhyde's POV.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Thrice fucked and still basking in the afterglow Will didn't resist as Hannibal carefully rearranged him, curling against his mate's body. On a rational level he knew he wouldn't be lucid enough to process anything beyond carnal need for long before he would be begging the alpha to take him again but struggled to form words through the onslaught of pheromones. Judging only by the number of times meal trays had been pushed through the delivery drawer he guessed it was the second day of his heat.

"Tell me about them and the life you've salvaged."

"That's not part of our agreement."

"Quid pro bono, is there really nothing more personal you would choose to ask me now in confidence?" Hannibal said, stoking softly over Will's back. "Uncle Jack would not begrudge you that."

Even with his mind clogged with hormones, Will had been dimly aware of how gently he'd been handled in preparation and held tenderly until he was whimpering to be bred again, like something precious and delicate. It would have taken a significant level of restraint for the alpha to do so, even if the sex itself left half crescent marks up Will's hips and thighs.

"I was told I'd be entitled to the same compensation as widowed omegas, generous enough considering my low chance of re-mating and next to no chance of being reemployed with three children under five. Nothing lavish but they're getting by just fine." Will propped his chin on his arms, folded atop the older man's chest. "Your lawyer contacted me shortly after

you were incarcerated to say you'd already set up trust funds for Abigail, and four additional children."

"One should be always be prepared for the likely future," Hannibal murmured into the omega's hair.

"That's the only personal question I'm answering.

"Feisty little thing," Hannibal chuckled. "Jack said you encountered the Dragon, however briefly, after he ate Blake's painting. How did you find him?"

"A mark carved into a tree by the Jacobi's house. The knife has been identified as the same one used on Leeds."

"And the carving?"

"A Chinese character. Sometimes a lucky sign but also was matched to a mahjong tile. The Red Dragon."

"And behold a great red dragon...Few images in Western art radiate such a unique and nightmarish charge of demonic sexuality. I'm sorry you didn't get to see it before the Dragon ate it."

"You suggested that?" Will struggled to keep himself focused but the possessive alpha pheromones only made it harder.

Hannibal pressed a kiss to Will's curls and wrapped both arms around him, turning them both to place himself on top.

"Hannibal-" Will's protest was cut off with another kiss, subconsciously spreading his legs for his alpha.

Hannibal smirked as Will went still beneath him, so delightfully malleable under the influence of his hormones.

"Do you know how he's choosing them?" Will gasped as Hannibal nipped lightly at the old scar on his throat, one hand dipping between his parted thighs.

"The information you need is already in your possession."

"No. No more riddles." Will closed his legs and tried to push the alpha off him.

Hannibal caught hold of Will's arms, shifting his weight to pin Will to the bed without his hands, working the slender thighs open with his knee. With one hand he slowly forced the omega's head to the side, baring the vulnerable spot where the base of his neck connected to his back.

"Please don't, please…"

"I would rather have you willingly receptive," Hannibal said gently.

Will whimpered in frustration but stopped struggling. It was humiliating how responsive his body was during heat, particularly to aggression; even as he strained against the alpha's weight Will could feel the slick dribbling from his hole and the hollow ache not from any injury.

The only defiance he allowed himself was to close his eyes against the alpha's smug smirk but parted his lips as Hannibal kissed him, submissively allowing the man to pry his mouth open with his tongue.

Satisfied that his omega would behave Hannibal relaxed his grip and dipped both hands to arrange toned legs either side of his own waist.

"So needy," he murmured as he lined himself up.

Will flinched automatically at the crackle of the intercom connected to the observation booth, an uncomfortable reminder that they were not alone, that they would never be permitted to truly be alone together again and ashamed at the twinge of sorrow that thought raised in his chest. He almost missed the flash of distaste and fury across Hannibal's generally placid features.

"Excuse me, Doctor Lecter. There's a man demanding to talk to your mate, says he's FBI…"

"You are aware of the privacy restrictions relating to heat visitation, Jonathan?" The alpha replied, voice low but icy.

"Is he here now?" Will asked, cutting off any further remark from Hannibal.

"Yes," the orderly replied after a pause. "Non-personal aren't generally permitted in the observation booth but he's requesting to talk over the phone or through the intercom. If you aren't willing to comply then I'm afraid the alternative is to gas the room and remove you both manually. "

"Put it on speakerphone," Hannibal said softly as he placed the cordless phone and manila folder, slipped through the tray delivery drawer, on Will's chest and settled back beside the omega.

"What do you want now, Jack?" Will asked wearily. He wondered vaguely if the man was actually on the other side of the one-way glass and watching them, quietly fuming about whatever unpleasant development was important enough to break protocol regarding conjugal visits. It was quite an unpleasant feeling.

"I'm growing tired of your presence and interruptions during private moments with my mate, Jack," Hannibal said before the other alpha could reply.

"Common curtesy doesn't apply to you anymore," Jack said coldly. "That being said I do want to keep this brief. It's about Freddie Lounds."

The chemical burn of chloraphone lingered around Freddie's nostrils and mouth as she regained consciousness but hesitated to open her eyes.

"Hello?" she called, scrunching her eyes tighter at the sound of movement just out of her line of sight.

Francis Dolarhyde sat silently watching his guest as she struggled to lever her bare arms off of the armrests, breathing sharply at the painful resistance from the glue.

With the heavy curtains drawn, the natural paleness of her skin cast a milky glow in the poor light of the projector. Stripped down to practical, inexpensive underwear, a sharp contrast to the flaming mane of curls and loud assortment of colour and accessories, the slim body looked almost androgynous. Small and so very breakable but not overly feminine.

A woman who took obvious pride in her work no matter how poor a grade of journalism it was and highly valued her own intelligence. That pride and confidence was evident in both the sweeping, arrogant statements and flamboyant style of dress, carefully designed to catch the eye and hold it without making a wanton exhibition of her body.

There were several traits about her that Francis envied and admired in small amounts such as the self confidence he had only recently begun to understand.

"Would you like a blanket? I'll get you a blanket."

Freddie flinched as hands carefully tucked the material around her, avoiding touching anywhere but her shoulders.

"I haven't seen your face," Freddie said, unsuccessfully keeping her voice from shaking. "I would not be able to identify you…"

"Have you not figured out who I am yet, Mi- Freddie?"

"No, I don't want to know." Freddie made herself swallow and breath in deeply to try and calm her breathing. "To be honest I am a little scared. I don't know what's going to happen and it's hard to think right when you're scared." She heard her captor stand, no longer attempting to modulate his heavy footsteps and the rustle of paper.

"Are you s-scared because according to you I am a vicious, perverted sexual failure. An incestuous animal." Francis disguised the slight stumble over the consonant 's' behind a throaty snarl. "Why did you lie?"

"They weren't my words. I was just quoting."

Desperate pleas blurred into static, like the tired buzzing off an old tape stuck on a fault. The noise abruptly stopped as he placed the heel of his hand over her mouth.

"Compared to me, you are a slug, ignorant of the majesty of my Becoming. Fear is not what you owe me; you owe me awe." The practised words taken from the pages of his journal rolled easier off his tongue. The last came almost as a throaty roar, flecks of saliva clinging to the bridge of Freddie's nose.

“Look at me.”

Freddie shook her head and flinched again as the wheelchair was wrenched forward, the man leaning in closer.

“When I turn you around, you will open your eyes and look at me or I’ll staple your eyelids to your forehead.”

The rippling pattern shaping out the body of the dragon stretched out over living muscle, flesh and bone.

Chapter End Notes

I'm a little concerned that this at least the second time I've cast Jack as 'unintentional voyeur'...

Anyway, if anyone feels like chatting about why poor Chilton had to almost die again or any other theories feel free to message me :) sarah@petalsandash

Chapter 6

The woman's face directed straight towards the camera, speaking slowly, hesitantly as she repeated the killer's warning. The automatic cut a few moments after she began to scream...

Will let the transcript and photos slip from his lap onto the floor.

“Did you ask him to kill her?” Will heard the rustle of the sheets as the alpha sat up beside him.

“Miss Lounds spoke appallingly about the Dragon, just as she frequently did about both of us. I suggested that burning would be appropriate,” Hannibal replied, draping his arms loosely around the omega’s chest and letting his chin rest on Will’s shoulder. “Although it is entirely down to Jack’s carelessness that a killer has developed such a personal interest in you.”

Dr Lecter, the Dragon regrets that you did not wish to know him but does not blame you for that betrayal. In turn, he hopes you will not bear him ill will after doing something you failed to do for years...

Will flinched at the brush of breath against his skin as the alpha scented him shamelessly.

“Please, just don’t touch me right now.” Will shifted away from the other man, the sheet pulled higher around his hips after the recent reminder that at least one person still was watching them. Burying his face in cupped hands the image of Freddie Lounds’ body alight blazing across his closed lids. The wave of nausea was not helped by the smallest touch of relief he could not quite ignore, nor the uncomfortable heat prickling across his skin and making his thoughts hazy.

“This was a mistake,” he breathed without looking up. Will didn’t actively resist as the alpha’s arms wrapped more firmly around him, hating himself for being so weak. The desire to curl back into his alpha’s arms was hard to resist so Will settled on remaining as still and unresponsive as he could.

Shushing him gently, Hannibal settled his omega in his lap, letting Will’s head lean against his chest and his own chin resting atop the dark curls. Will shifted his knees to close his legs as much as he was able to, lucid enough to be embarrassed.

“They're still watching us-“

"Shh, let yourself enjoy the sensations," Hannibal breathed against his skin. "You are so close to how you’re going to catch him. ..” The last words faded to a whisper almost an afterthought.

“What is the Dragon looking for, Will?” Hannibal asked after a few moments.

“I don’t-”

“Yes, you do.”

“He’s, changing, no…becoming. Becoming a being he deems as much more than a man. An unstable blend of traditionalism and revelation built from the abstract and romanticised views of Blake."

“Although I agree that our shy boy is envious of alphas and their social standing he does not see people as the dynamics or even living things, just props to aid his own performance. He did not discriminate because what he sees is only the beauty of happy families.”

“This is old ground and you know it.” Will struggled against the grip enough to let him look up at the older man. “Just tell me how he’s choosing them.”

“The most likely source would be social media but nothing so careless as to leave an obvious link. The Dragon did not know his victims but watched them live before he visited them.” As he spoke Hannibal readjusted his position to laying back against the bed, keeping his movements slow and small enough as not to startle the omega still pressed against him. “Just as you saw them.”

“Everything he would have needed to know was on the tapes,” Will said slowly. “A lot less people make home movies on video cameras anymore, they just use their phones. They were old models that still used film, not digital. There’s a chance we can trace that.”

“Remarkable boy.” Hannibal pressed a quick kiss to Will’s brow and abruptly changed their positions, flipping the omega over onto his front and blanketing the trembling body with his own.

“Hannibal-”

“Shh, you will not be permitted to leave before tomorrow and there’s nothing more you can do till then. Let yourself be selfish just for a few more hours.” He cut off any further protests with kiss and nip to his neck, smiking slightly and continuing down Will’s back as his mate shivered deliciously and went pliant beneath him, any thoughts of leaving silenced for the moment.

Will grimaced as he sat up, the sticky feel of four days worth of body fluids clinging to his skin much more apparent without the heat hormones. Although there was a small shower in the room he still had no clothes other than the sweaty visitor jumpsuit so decided against it.

At some point Hannibal had started to pet and play with the small breasts as he pushed into Will, laying his weight across the omega’s back to worry a nipple with his teeth and releasing a triumphant growl as a drop of sweet milk touched his tongue. Will had cried out in surprise

as he was pulled back up off his hands and knees to the alpha's lap, seating him on the almost fully formed knot as the dual motions continued.

Neither of them had spoken for some time, waiting for the rattle of the breakfast trolley and the orderlies that arrive almost immediately after.

"There was so much I wanted to ask you but now I'd rather not have to know for certain." He felt the alpha shift into a sitting position beside him and a hand rest atop his knee but no further attempt to touch him.

"I will not insult your intelligence by lying that I regret the methods I used to court you or much of my actions in attempting to hold onto the life I'd built for us. Indeed I would have done almost anything to obtain you."

The earnest passion and possessiveness in the older man's voice was enough to make Will tear his gaze from his own lap to the alpha's face but resolutely kept his hands at his sides.

"If circumstances allowed I would have liked to see what kind of a woman Abigail would grow to be and to have known Annabel and Eleanor," Hannibal continued, tone dropping slightly. "Will you come back again?"

"No." Will dragged a hand through his hair wearily. "Nothing's changed, Hannibal. I can't even consider trying to forgive you for everything without questioning my sanity and any future for the girls."

It had only taken hours to identify Francis Dolarhyde, the case drawing to an unexpected, rapid conclusion with the man's suicide and testimony of his confession provided by Reba Mclane.

Of course it couldn't end like that, far too simple, too dignified...

Will groaned groggily as he opened his eyes. Trying to ignore the lingering, dry reek of chloroform he turned his attention to his surroundings: still in the hotel, propped up but unbound. With only the one portable lamp light he could make out the other man's profile sitting opposite him but half his face was shadowed atop his folded fingers. A gun lay across his lap.

"You didn't break my back." Will managed to keep his voice calm, deflecting only the genuine surprise, so grateful that he had decided it was too late too pick up Abigail and the twins from Muskrat Farm. He was not completely confident in predicting what the killer would do.

"Not today." The man raised his head off his hands, tilting it slightly as he regarded Will. "Do you really believe that you understand?"

"I understand that blood and breath are only elements undergoing change to fuel your Radiance." Will swallowed dryly, making himself meet the other's eyes and watch the slight

changes in his face as he spoke. “Hannibal said those words. To me, when he was trying to convince me that I was something I’m not.”

“I tried to share with Lecter, and he betrayed me.”

“We have that in common, just as I expect you would like to see him repaid that favour as much as I would.”

“I've got no reason to trust Lecter's whore,” the beta chuckled darkly.

“I'm not affiliated with his plans or actions and I don't particularly care what happens to him, whatever you have planned. Hannibal is who you need to change.”

Dolarhyde leaned forward slightly. “I want to meet Lecter. I want to tell him important things. How could I manage that?”

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

> Hello my dears,
>
> Real world inconveniences has kept me busy for far too long and I hope not too many people have thought that this fic had been abandoned. Special thanks to the remarkable Elderflower :)

See the end of the chapter for more notes

"You mind telling me what you're thinking?"

"You'd probably rather not know." Will's eyes flicked briefly up to level with the alpha's chin before returning them to the emptying sink. He heard Jack push the bathroom door closed and come to stand beside him, leaning silently against the granite counter.

"Hannibal would be the best bait to lure Dolarhyde out," Will said after several moments of silence. "Fake an escape, leak just enough details to sound authentic and then plant an invitation to contact him again. Maybe in the comments section on TattleCrime."

"He's not going to be dumb enough to agree to a meet up with Lecter or whatever you're going to say next."

"Then you make a show of transporting Ha-Lecter to another facility. He might be curious enough to check out the spot just to see if he has been set up. If that doesn't work include a contact number and try to trace the call again. But," Will paused. "You would have to make Lecter agree to go along with it."

Jack breathed out heavily. "Which he won't do unless he gets something out of it."

"I don't see another option." Will turned to go, flinching as the older man caught his arm.

"Jack, what are you doing?"

"I need you to be the one to tell Lecter, make him agree. And it works better for appearances if you're seen as part of the convoy."

"No."

"No?" The alpha drew back to his full height as he repeated the word.

"You don't need me to make it look real and you can figure out another way to make him agree if it comes to that. Hannibal gets an opportunity to show that he's better by default than

the Dragon; that should be enough." Will yanked his arm out of the other man's hold. "I'm going to pick up my kids and take them home, and hope Abigail doesn't remember any of this down the track."

Will had managed to appear surprised when the call from local PD informed him that the high security convoy transporting his alpha had been attacked and the man in question was now unaccounted for.

It was an odd relief to see the car pull away. Barely seventy hours after the escape the two officers stationed as security had been withdrawn, apparently accepting how low the chance of a serial killer who had avoided arrest for decades attempting to contact his mate mere days later was. Will wondered briefly if that had not been considered at all and he and his family were now being offered up as bait.

The suggestion was hardly as farfetched as it should have been.

Abby grumbled softly as he roused her but went upstairs without argument, a smattering of dog fur clinging to her pyjamas. A few minutes later, after quickly checking in on the twins, she had begun to drift off, darkening blond head just visible above the nest of blankets.

Will didn't turn the light on as he went back upstairs to bed, having got into the habit of undressing in the dark in order to avoid the sight of the old scars. It was difficult enough to just feel the more recent marks of ownership and healing bruises littering his skin, without the sight to remind him even further of what he was and how foolish he had let himself act in Baltimore.

On the opposite side of the bedroom the curtain rustled faintly but Will paid it no mind till the noise repeated closer.

No, not fluttering material, a socked foot on the carpet…

He hesitated a moment too long, fumbling for the wall as an arm caught around his throat and began compressing his windpipe.

……..

A plain grey ceiling swum slowly into focus as Will struggled back into consciousness, mind still hazy, he expected, from an injection to ensure he'd stay asleep for a while longer after passing out.

The room had a feeling of neglect despite the lack of dust, guest room he reasoned, with no furniture besides a desk, wardrobe and the bed he had been left on.

Sitting up and looking around the sparsely furnished room he noticed a handgun Will recognised as his own placed on the desk and folded at the foot of the bed, a dress shirt,

slacks and accompanying dress shoes. An invitation rather than outright command but Will hesitated for only a few seconds before shedding his track pants and t-shirt and putting on the offered clothes. The familiar weight of the gun was reassuring and out of habit he checked the cylinder, finding four of the six slots loaded.

Slipping the gun into the top of his pants Will stepped out into a similarly bare hallway, following the slight hum of music into another room. The general feeling of emptiness was apparent in the lack of paintings and decorative pieces that had made the house in Chandler Square such a morbid map of the man himself; if that is one knew to look.

Hannibal himself stood by a large window in the main room, the view outside of a terrance overlooking a cliff face and churning waves. Dressed similarly in the slacks and shirt of a suit but without tie, vest or jacket instead of full formal attire or the prison uniform of their last three meetings he looked as if it could've been six years earlier. A different time in more ways than one.

"Where are we?"

Hannibal's eyes flicked up to meet his reflections' briefly before crossing to a side table where an open bottle of wine was breathing. "A holiday home once owned by a former patient before his suicide eight years ago. I purchased it under another name in private auction after his few family members expressed no interest in maintaining the house or any other possessions."

"I'm surprised how no one ever noticed how many of your patients had a habit of doing that."

Hannibal chuckled at the response. "Is Jack or anyone else aware of the bargain you tried to broker with the Dragon? It would explain the lack of security at your home to make it easier to draw us both out but I doubt even he would act so desperately."

Will made no attempt to deny it. "You expected that I would."

"Yes," Hannibal replied without hesitation. "You knew very well that I would always find you but could not bear to tarnish our children's home by acknowledging the danger more than unavoidably forced to. Just as I knew I would not have to persuade you to leave with me in order to keep the danger from them but in this way the burden of choice is not on you."

Even if he knew that Dolarhyde would've been following Hannibal and could likely be watching them now he could not deny the relief that his children were relatively safe for now as the killer would not waste time on theatrics now. "And what happens to the girls?"

"We agreed some years ago that Alana would be named as Abigail's guardian if the circumstances called for it and my lawyer informs me that it is the same for Annabel and Eleanor. I called the police identifying myself and informing them of my intentions to abduct my mate and then Alana to warn her that she will likely be contacted by child protection services if you are unable to take the girls home again. You will not be implicated in whatever happens tonight."

“Thank you.” Will accepted the offered glass of wine somewhat tentatively. “I haven't had a drink since before Abigail was born.”

Hannibal studied the omega for a long moment over his own glass before stepping closer. Calloused fingers caressed Will’s cheek, pushing a stray curl back and sweeping down to let a thumb trace over the bond mark, standing out among the fresher bruises.

“Are you going to tell me why I’m here?”

“It was by my poor handling that I know only a little of Abigail and you did not allow me to know the younger girls,” Hannibal said softly, a trace of an emotion Will may have called regret in his words. “Perhaps trust is no longer an option but do you still believe I would harm you?”

Will laughed darkly. “You have. At length.”

Hannibal didn't respond, giving his omega the chance to continue.

He had allowed himself to loose control and acted with primal rage. That lose of control had been the reason why the omega had been able to trick him. He had been able to train Will to his side years ago through gentle authority, leading the fragile omega to rely on him and become addicted to his touch and scent but the man still unwillingly uncovered his secrets...

“The strange thing is,” Will continued, barely above whispering, “given enough time I probably could forgive you for everything. But you don’t deserve that.” He pulled back and took a sip at last. “It’s too late for redemption now.”

“In turn you were prepared to wait idly in the wings and read later on that the dragon had killed me; banking on him abducting me to complete the process in a more intimate location yet instead he allowed me to find you. And by listening to Jack’s sad snippets about other people’s dead children you’ve endangered your own and made yourself acceptable to our new friend’s tastes, lest we forget.”

“Any interest in me is only in relation to you.” Will interrupted. Without thinking much of it he drained the rest of the glass. “He’ll be watching us, probably right now.”

“I have no doubt,” the alpha replied as he retrieved the bottle. His tone remained almost detached as if the thought were only a mildly interesting anecdote.

The click of the bullet and delayed breaking glass somehow were muted by the sound of the bottle still in the alpha’s hand shattering barely a moment later.

The echo of gunfire continued long after the device had slipped, now empty, through his fingers.

For a moment it was Abigail Hobbs Will saw laid out on the cold cliffside as his own blood pooled from the wounds in his shoulder and cheek. The dead girl he had been unable to save all those years ago slowly faded into the larger shape of Dolarhyde’s shell; the dark stains

made by cuts, half a dozen bullets and Hannibal's teeth -(half tearing his throat as he dragged the larger man back and off balance, Will reaching for the dropped knife only to close bloodied fingers around his forgotten gun instead)- pooled around him to almost form the shape of the wings the Dragon had desired.

Will felt Hannibal move closer to him more than any other sense, reaching to grasp the extended hand and letting his mate half lift him to his feet. Weakening from bloodloss now that the surges of adrenaline would be diminishing Hannibal had not paid heed to how close they both were to the cliff's edge.

It would not take that much… Will thought, barely aware of the gentle words being pressed into his temple like the similar press of chaste kisses. But, he would only have one chance and to be certain that they both would fall it would take their combined weight.

The hand at the back of his neck shifted to make him look up at the alpha, almost beseechingly.

"You have allowed yourself to be pushed past breaking point time and again for the sake of faceless others who would most likely scorn any efforts because you are an omega. Do you truly still feel any obligation to obey constructs of a society that has failed you in almost every manner?" The rougher note betrayed a trace of the exhaustion and raw emotion he had never heard from his mate before. To his bloodless addled brain it was enough to take Will's mind back unbidden to early mornings long past spent wrapped in the alpha's arms. The same hands currently supporting him, so often draped possessively over his stomach and the growing shape of their first child.
Will choked back a dry sob. He loved his children more than he once would have thought possible given the circumstances, but how many times over the months and years had he tried to dismiss feelings of grief and loss from the irrational void?

How would Alana choose to explain to Abigail why he would not be coming back to her? What would Eleanor and Annabel be told eventually years after they had forgotten anything before the Verger estate…

Trembling, he sank back to his knees, the blood still seeping down his face. "We can't be back here again," Will said weakly. "Just waiting."

Hannibal lowered himself with little more grace, letting their foreheads rest together as the droplets settled into the already formed black pool between them. "I decided a long time ago that I did not wish you dead. Do you still cling to the illusion that you are capable of removing me? That you would survive the sever if you were able to carve me out?"

Removing them both was in some ways the most selfless option and also the least. Neither of them deserved the quick death or escape from each other. Whatever reason was the most true, of which his children featured heavily in many of them, did not matter; Will knew he would never be able to rid himself of Hannibal even through both their deaths. It should have mattered more than it did.

"No."

Fingertips brushed gently along his cheekbone quickly examining the jagged cut before the alpha stood with obvious strain although none of that was reflected in his face or small triumphant smile.

“Come, that will need tending to.”

Will accepted the hand offered wondering how the man was still able to stand before following him back to the distant lights of the house already beginning to blur together.

Chapter End Notes

Contents does not represent my feelings or interpretation to the actual conclusion to Wrath of the Lamb but no matter who I scoped out this particular AU it always came back to this.

As always let me know below what you think of it :)

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!